

## FLORENCE EARLE COATES.

THE poetry of Florence Earle Coates is characterized by a genuineness, a sincerity, a grasp of the deeper meanings of life, which show that her utterances come from no mere graceful impulse to poetize her impressions of the world and of herself, but rest on the sober foundation of a real experience and a clear analysis of the passion and aspirations that move humanity. She takes her subject not to embellish it with charming conceits, but to draw from it thoughts of joy, of strength, of consolation. The critic, finding in her writings much to denote that they are the product of a mature and disciplined mind, might ask how it happens that so comparatively untried a writer has learned to discard the fluent versification which generally accompanies the passionate enthusiasm of youth, and mastered so firm and delicate a method, so fastidious a self-restraint. The truth is that Mrs. Coates's first strong artistic bent found its expression in other arts than that of poetry. A Philadelphian by birth, and carefully educated both in this country and in Europe, at an early age she attained a high degree of excellence as a musician. In addition to technical skill, and delicacy and precision of style, she possessed an insight and power of interpretation of the great masters, denied to all but real artists. Besides being an exquisite musician, she was endowed with rare dramatic talent. The special needs and aspirations of the poet developed later. The writings of Matthew Arnold were a great inspiration to her. Later she was destined to know the master who had revealed so much to her, and to receive from him sympathy and encouragement. At their house in Germantown, which was his home during his visits to Philadelphia, Mr. and Mrs. Coates formed with him a friendship which lasted until his death. Mrs. Coates has acknowledged her debt to Mr. Arnold in many ways, and has perhaps in manner of treatment and in large utterance gained something from him.

Florence Earle Coates belongs to a well-known Philadelphia family; the founder, Ralph Earle, having come from England to America in 1634. Her father, George H. Earle, is an eminent lawyer, and her grandfather, Thomas Earle, was noted as a philanthropist and a worker for the public good. Her husband, Edward H. Coates, is a well-known and influential man, and is connected with a number of the charitable and other institutions of Philadelphia. He is chairman of the schools of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and is one of the most generous patrons of art and artists. What time Mrs. Coates is able to give to her literary pursuits, is snatched from the duties and obligations of an unusually

full social and domestic life. Yet none of her work is hurried, or marred by over haste and a desire to see it in print. Many of her poems have, no doubt, been written at her summer retreat at Camp Elsinore, charmingly situated on the Upper St. Regis Lake, in the Adirondacks.

Mrs. Coates is still a young woman, with a beautiful, brilliant face and a charming manner. Those who know her best, if called upon to give the final touch in describing her, would be inclined to add, that of her many gifts, her most fortunate endowment is, perhaps, that of being a delightful conversationalist. E. O. K.

## DEATH.

I AM the key that parts the gates of Fame;  
I am the cloak that covers cowering Shame;  
I am the final goal of every race;  
I am the storm-tossed spirit's resting-place:

The messenger of sure and swift relief,  
Welcomed with wailings and reproachful grief;  
The friend of those that have no friend but me.  
I break all chains, and set all captives free.

I am the cloud that, when Earth's day is done,  
An instant veils an unextinguished sun;  
I am the brooding hush that follows strife,  
The waking from a dream that Man calls—Life!

## REJECTED.

THE World denies her prophets with rash breath,  
Makes rich her slaves, her flatterers adorns;  
To Wisdom's lips she presses drowsy death,  
And on the brow Divine a crown of thorns.  
Yet blessed, though neglected and despised—  
Who for the World himself hath sacrificed,  
Who hears unmoved her witless mockery,  
While to his spirit, slighted and misprised,  
Whisper the voices of Eternity!

## IN DARKNESS.

I WILL be still;  
The terror drawing nigh  
Shall startle from my lips no coward cry;  
Nay, though the night my deadliest dread fulfil,  
I will be still.

For oh! I know.  
Though suffering hours delay,  
Yet to Eternity they pass away,  
Carrying something onward as they flow,  
Outlasting woe!

Yes, something won;  
The harvest of our tears—  
Something unfading, plucked from fading years;  
Something to blossom on beyond the sun,  
From Sorrow won.

The agony,  
So hopeless now of balm,  
Shall sleep at last, in light as pure and calm,  
As that wherewith the stars look down on thee,  
Gethsemane.

### PROBATION.

FULL slow to part with her best gifts is Fate;  
The choicest fruitage comes not with the spring,  
But still for summer's mellowing touch must wait,  
For storms and tears that seasoned excellence  
bring;  
And Love doth fix his joyfulest estate  
In hearts that have been hushed 'neath Sorrow's  
brooding wing.  
Youth sues to Fame: coldly she answers, "Toil!"  
He sighs for Nature's treasures: with reserve  
Responds the goddess, "Woo them from the soil."  
Then fervently he cries, "Thee will I serve,—  
Thee only, blissful Love." With proud recoil  
The heavenly boy replies, "To serve me well—  
deserve."

### LIMITATION.

As when the imperial bird wide-circling soars  
From his lone eyry, towered above the seas  
That wash the wild and rugged Hebrides,  
A force which he unconsciously adores  
Bounds the majestic flight that heaven explores,  
And droops his haughty wing,—as when the  
breeze  
Tempted to o'erleap their changeless boundaries  
The waves that tumble, foaming, to those shores,—  
So thou, my soul! impatient of restriction,  
With deathless hopes and longings all aglow,  
Aspirest still, and still the stern prediction  
Stays thee, as them, "No further shalt thou go!"  
But, ah! the eagle feels not thine affliction,  
Nor can the broken waves thy disappointment  
know.

### MORNING.

I WOKE and heard the thrushes sing at dawn,—  
A strangely blissful burst of melody,  
A chant of rare, exultant certainty,  
Fragrant, as springtime breaths, of wood and lawn.

Night's eastern curtains were still closely drawn;  
No roseate flush predicted pomps to be,  
Or spoke of morning loveliness to me.  
But, for those happy birds, the night was gone!  
Darkling they sang, nor guessed what care con-  
sumes  
Man's questioning spirit; heedless of decay  
They sang of joy and dew-embalmed blooms.  
My doubts grew still, doubts seemed so poor  
while they,  
Sweet worshippers of light, from leafy glooms  
Poured forth transporting prophecies of Day.

### DIDST THOU REJOICE?

DIDST thou rejoice because the day was fair,—  
Because, in orient splendor newly dressed,  
On flowering glebe and bloomless mountain-  
crest  
The sun complacent smiled? Ah! didst thou dare  
The careless rapture of that bird to share  
Which, soaring toward the dawn from dewy nest,  
Hailed it with song? From Ocean's treacherous  
breast  
Didst borrow the repose mild-mirrored there?  
Thou foolish heart! Behold! the light is spent;  
Rude thunders shake the crags; songs timorous  
cease;  
Lo! with what moan and mutinous lament  
Ocean his pent-up passions doth release!  
O thou who seeketh sure and fixed content,  
Search in thy soul: there find some source of  
peace.

### FREDERICK.

"RESPECT the Future, *which belongs to me!*"  
So speak thy yearning and imperious will,  
Making the Present distant faiths fulfil,  
And raised from falling kingdoms—Germany.

No idle name, no doubtful dream to thee  
That Future: actual, its clasp grown chill,  
It led thee, and thy soul sublimed it still,—  
Heir of a more than earthly dynasty!

O didst thou think, untimely called to rest,  
The preparation of a life o'erthrown—  
To lose what thou so bravely didst resign?

Forevermore the Fatherland shall own  
Her nobler liberties thy dear bequest:  
The future thy great spirit saw—was thine!